



# OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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## GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

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You asked for information on state financial assistance programs for grandparents raising grandchildren.

### SUMMARY

Grandparents raising grandchildren may qualify for financial assistance through certain state programs. Those who become guardians of grandchildren involved in the child welfare system (e.g., victims of child abuse or neglect) receive the largest benefit through the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Subsidized Guardianship Program. Under this program, grandparents receive monthly stipends equal to that of foster care payments. The current monthly rates range from \$777.00 to \$1,469.09 for each child, depending on the child's age and needs. (Payments for children with medically complex problems are higher).

Grandparents who become guardians of children not involved in the child welfare system may be eligible for a substantially smaller Temporary Family Assistance (TFA or cash welfare) payment from the Department of Social Services (DSS). In most parts of the state, a qualifying guardian receives a monthly "child only" TFA payment of \$354 for the first grandchild.

In addition, the New Haven Regional Children's Probate Court administers an extended family guardianship and assisted care program that provides annual grants of up to \$1,000 to eligible guardian relatives to help pay for child care costs. The Children's Trust Fund's Kinship and Respite Fund programs also provide one-time grants to help grandparents pay for certain nonrecurring child care costs. The grants are administered in several local probate courts and one DSS regional office.

## **DCF SUBSIDIZED GUARDIANSHIP PROGRAM**

When DCF places court-committed abused or neglected children in a grandparent's care, it pays the grandparent a monthly foster care payment between \$777.00 and \$1,469.09 for each child, depending on the child's age, needs, and the number of days in each month. The grandparent must obtain a foster care license and meet DCF standards for living arrangements, and the department provides care management and other support services as it does for non-relative foster parents. After six months, grandparents may ask DCF to make them subsidized guardians through Superior Court. DCF may grant such requests when it determines, among other things, that:

1. reunification with the child's parents in the foreseeable future is not a viable option due a death, abandonment, disability, or an inadequate living environment provided by the parents;
2. the grandparent can meet the child's needs without DCF's continued involvement and nonmonetary support;
3. the grandparent has established a nurturing, stable relationship with the child; and
4. the grandparent is able to decide the appropriate level of ongoing contact with the child's other biological family members based on the child's best interests and safety (Conn. Agencies Reg., § 17a-126-1 et seq., DCF Policy 40-50-1 et seq.).

Once guardianship is granted, caregivers continue to receive monthly payments equal to the foster care rates (See Table 1).

**Table 1: FY 13 Foster Care/Subsidized Guardianship Rates**

		<i>Monthly Rate</i>	
<i>Child's Age</i>	<i>Per Diem Rate</i>	<i>Rate for 31 day months (July, August, October, December, January, March, and May)</i>	<i>Rate for 30 day months (September, November, April, and June)</i>
0-5 years	\$25.90	\$802.90	\$777.00
6-11 years	\$26.16	\$810.96	\$784.80
12 year and older	\$28.02	\$868.62	\$840.60
Medically Complex	\$47.39	\$1,469.09	\$1,421.70

Source: DCF, 8/24/12

## **TFA “CHILD ONLY” PAYMENTS**

Grandparents raising grandchildren who are not committed to DCF are not formally subsidized by the state, although a qualifying guardian may receive a monthly “child only” TFA payment from DSS. A qualifying guardian in DSS region B receives a monthly TFA payment of \$354 for the first grandchild, which is substantially less than the rate paid to guardians of children involved in the child welfare system. (Most of the state falls in region B; rates differ slightly in regions A and C.) Table 2 shows the monthly increase for each additional child in region B for whom the grandparent assumes guardianship.

**Table 2: Monthly TFA Payments by Household Size**

<i>Children Under Guardianship</i>	<i>Total Monthly TFA Payment – Region B</i>
1	\$354
2	\$470
3	\$576
4	\$677
5	\$775

Source: DSS (8/29/12)

## **PROBATE COURT PROGRAMS**

The New Haven Regional Children’s Probate Court administers an extended family guardianship and assisted care program. Its goal is to reduce the number of abused or neglected children by placing them in the care of family members and encouraging the family members to become guardians. A guardian relative is eligible for an annual cash grant of up to \$1000 per family if he or she (1) was appointed guardian by the New Haven Regional Children’s Probate Court or any probate court serving that region and (2) is not receiving DCF services. Grants may be

used to help pay for certain child rearing costs such as medical, behavioral, and dental health care; summer and school vocational programs; and tutoring, educational services, and extra-curricular activities.

In addition, the Children's Trust Fund's Kinship and Respite Fund programs provide one-time grants of up to \$500 per child and \$2,000 per family to help relative caregivers, including grandparents, pay for certain nonrecurring child rearing costs. These can pay for such things as a bed or winter coat or for activities like summer camp or tutoring. The funds are available only through (1) probate courts in Berlin, Bridgeport, Hartford, and New Haven; (2) the regional children's probate courts in Central Connecticut, New Haven, New London, Northeast Connecticut, and Waterbury; and (3) the Norwich DSS office.

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